

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method of moderating traffic load on network servers in a network where electronic mail is retained for retrieval from at least one mail server, the method comprising:
permitting a mail request for a mail client to pass through a proxy server to the mail server; and
delaying subsequent mail requests for the mail client at the proxy server until a predetermined condition has been satisfied.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined condition is a predetermined period of time.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the predetermined period of time is dynamically determined based on the amount of traffic load on the network.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the predetermined period of time is dynamically determined based on past behavior of the mail client.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
transmitting a message to the mail client providing information that the mail client's mail requests will be delayed as a result of the mail client's past behavior.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein transmitting a message comprises providing instructions on how to modify mail client software.

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1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined condition is a combination
2 of a predetermined time period and receipt of a notification from the mail server that mail
3 has been received for the mail client at the mail server, whichever occurs first.

1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the predetermined period of time is
2 dynamically determined based on the amount of traffic load on the network.

1 9. The method of claim 7, wherein the predetermined period of time is
2 dynamically determined based on past behavior of the mail client.

1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
2 transmitting a message to the mail client providing information that the mail
3 client's mail requests will be delayed as a result of the mail client's past behavior.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein delaying subsequent mail requests includes
2 attenuating transmission of the subsequent mail requests.

1 12. The method of claim 1, wherein delaying subsequent mail requests is
2 suspended in the event it is determined that a user is manually initiating rapidly repeated
3 mail requests.

1 13. The method of claim 1, wherein delaying subsequent mail requests is achieved
2 by inserting multiple delays that are inserted at different points in a mail protocol.

1 14. A proxy server for use in a network where electronic mail is retained for
2 retrieval from at least one mail server, the proxy server comprising:
3 a processor, and

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1 20. The proxy server of claim 17, wherein the predetermined period of time is
2 dynamically determined based on the amount of traffic load on the network.

1 21. The proxy server of claim 17, wherein the predetermined period of time is
2 dynamically determined based on past behavior of the mail client.

1 22. The proxy server of claim 21, wherein the memory further includes software
2 instructions to enable the proxy server to perform the step of:
3 transmitting a message to the mail client providing information that the mail
4 client's mail requests will be delayed as a result of the mail client's past behavior.

1 23. The proxy server of claim 14, wherein delaying subsequent mail requests is
2 suspended in the event it is determined that a user is manually initiating rapidly repeated
3 mail requests.

1 24. The proxy server of claim 14, wherein delaying subsequent mail requests is
2 achieved by inserting multiple delays that are inserted at different points in a mail
3 protocol.

1 25. The proxy server of claim 14, wherein delaying subsequent mail requests
2 includes attenuating transmission of the subsequent mail requests.

1 26. A method of moderating traffic load on network servers in a network where
2 electronic mail is retained for retrieval from at least one mail server, the method
3 comprising:
4 permitting a mail request for a mail client to pass through a proxy server to the
5 mail server;

